

ONE  
HUNDRED  
ASPECTS OF THE  
**M O O N**  
JAPANESE WOODBLOCK PRINTS BY  
**YOSHITOSHI**

BY TAMARA TJARDES

## Acknowledgments

The significance of a museum to its community is measured in the quality and relevance of its collections, collections shaped in large part by the support of individuals and institutions. The Museum of International Folk Art is fortunate to have been the recipient of an extraordinary gift to its collections. Over a long period of some twenty-six years, Else and Joseph Chapman shared a devotion to collecting all one hundred woodblock prints in the series *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, one of the most important artists of nineteenth-century Japan. This generous donation demonstrates the Chapmans' support of the museum's mission to document and interpret the arts and cultures of people around the world. The prints in *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* represent a unique and valuable resource for understanding everyday life and lore in traditional Japanese culture.

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## Note on the Organization of Prints

For the purpose of this publication the images are arranged thematically in three broad categories: Literature, Myth, and Music; The Warrior; and The Floating World. The arrangement follows the design of the exhibit installation "*One Hundred Aspects of the Moon: Japanese Woodblock Prints* by Yoshitoshi," held at the Museum of International Folk Art from July 15 to October 14, 2001. The numbers on the prints refer to the order in which the prints appeared in the exhibit. The date given with each of the individual prints is the date it was originally issued to the public.

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*One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* is a series of one hundred woodblock prints by Yoshitoshi in the collection of the Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.

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# Introduction

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## *Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892)*

TSUKIOKA YOSHITOSHI WAS BORN in the city of Edo (now Tokyo) shortly before Japan's violent transformation from a medieval to



a modern society. In the mid-nineteenth century, pressures from the United States and Europe brought an end to Japan's two hundred years of self-imposed isolation. In 1868, a pivotal period began known as the Meiji Restoration, which was marked by the return of imperial power, heightened militarism, a new constitution, and industrial advancement, as well as social and political reform. In the midst of shifting values, woodblock print artists such as Yoshitoshi struggled to create images to satisfy the public's rapidly changing tastes.

During the Edo period (1600-1868), woodblock prints, or Ukiyo-e (literally, "pictures of the floating world"), became one of the most popular and inexpensive visual art forms in Japan. From the time the first monochrome prints were published in the 1600s, Ukiyo-e represented a unique collaboration between publishers, artists, and the public. These prints were available primarily in the cities, where publishers strung up newly designed single-sheet prints along their shop fronts and signboards announced upcoming series. Middlemen connected publishers to smaller shops in and around cities and arranged with street vendors to display prints in open-air kiosks. Townspeople and visitors bought them as gifts and souvenirs, sometimes competing to collect all the prints in a series. The fluctuating interests of the urban merchant class largely dictated the subject matter in woodblock prints.

During this era, woodblock prints were viewed as cheap, expendable amusement wholly outside the realm of serious art. In fact, Ukiyo-e was the first school of art in Japan whose artists relied on mass production and mainstream sales of their work as opposed to serving a few elite clients. It wasn't until the Post-Impressionists in Europe and America demonstrated enthusiastic interest in these prints that the rest of the world became aware of this fascinating genre. Ironically, for many in the West, Ukiyo-e continues to be their only exposure to Japanese art. And, in retrospect, Yoshitoshi and his predecessors can be seen as the originators of a major popular culture tradition that continues in present-day Japan in a variety of forms, including *manga* (comic book art) and *anime* (animated cartoons).

Yoshitoshi's experience of the savagery of his times, especially early in his career, was exorcised through a prolific series of prints reflecting the violence of battling warriors, demons, and murderers. Later in his career, however, Yoshitoshi's work underwent a distinctive stylistic change. By the 1880s, the period of *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, he was experimenting freely with Western concepts of space, perspective, and dissonant color combinations. His treatment of movement and facial features revealed a more studied and quiet observation of the human form and emotions. While continuing to choose native themes for his prints, Yoshitoshi's approach to creating individualized portraits of townspeople, farmers, courtesans, and warriors became innovative and groundbreaking.

As the Meiji period (1868-1912) came to a close, woodblock print artists, who typically also worked as book and newspaper illustrators, faced increasing competition for the public's attention from the newly introduced arts of photography and lithography. In spite of this, at the time of his death Yoshitoshi was still considered the leading designer among his contemporaries. And today, with a resurgence of interest in and respect for his brilliance, Yoshitoshi *is* universally celebrated as one of the great masters of the Ukiyo-e tradition.

### *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*

Yoshitoshi's series, *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, completed shortly before his death in 1892 and published between 1885 and 1892, epitomizes the restraint and subtlety that mark his mature work. Against the backdrop of a national policy of westernization, Yoshitoshi offered his audience a pilgrimage to Japan's glorious past. The series of one hundred individual woodblock prints depicts figures from Japanese and Chinese mythology, folklore, history, literature, and theater. Each subject is captured at a moment in time and held suspended by a poetic dialogue with the moon. The Moon series was so popular that townspeople were said to have lined up before dawn to buy a print of the latest image.

Reverence for the moon has a rich cultural history in Japan. In a predominantly agrarian society, the power of the moon, in all its

manifestations, was worshiped, celebrated, and feared. In preindustrial Japan, the phases of the moon formed the basis of the calendar system, with the new moon marking the first day of each month and the full moon following two weeks later. Those familiar with this system can correlate the date of a specific event with the corresponding phase of the moon. Even in the fast-paced, high-tech world of modern Japan, people honor the full moon on the night of August 1<sup>s</sup> by the lunar calendar. On this night of "moon viewing," or *tsukimi*, people arrange dumplings, eulalia, and seasonal fruits in ritual offerings for future abundant harvests.

Yoshitoshi used the phases of the moon and their symbolism as a commentary on the human condition. The artist's own experiences with poverty and mental illness instilled in him a sense of compassion and a desire to explore the depth and range of the human condition. While the sense of tranquility that Yoshitoshi seemed to achieve in his last years is evident in *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, there is also underlying darkness and loneliness that haunt the viewer. In a country that was no longer the old Japan and not yet the new Japan, such complexities had great appeal.

*Holding back the night  
With its increasing brilliance  
The summer moon  
(Yoshitoshi's death poem)*

## Part One: Literature, Myth, and Music

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HISTORICAL LITERATURE AND FOLKTALES, typically the subjects of traditional theater, provided Yoshitoshi with rich resources



particularly well-suited to the lyrical and melancholic mood of the Moon series. In his later years, Yoshitoshi's life and art were greatly influenced by the aesthetics of classical Noh drama, one of the most beautiful of Japanese literary forms. Noh, which developed out of several dance-drama forms such as folk dance and temple entertainment infused with moral instruction, represents the essence of understatement and economy of gesture and movement, where one step

can symbolize a complete journey. Such symbolic movement and gesture are evident in the *Moon* series.

In *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, Yoshitoshi recalls subjects from Indian and Chinese legends, heroes of classic novels, famous musicians, and masters of haiku. In these prints, music and poetry seem to form the stage on which the characters perform. And, similar to the construct of a Noh play, the figures in the Moon series are rarely portrayed at the instant of a climactic deed but rather at a moment just preceding it or in poetic recollection of some past event.

## RISING MOON OVER MOUNT NANPING

(Nanpiezan shogetsu)

October 1885

**C**ao Cao (A.D. 155-200), a powerful and treacherous Chinese military leader and central figure in Romance of the Three Kingdoms (*San guo yan yi*), is shown here crossing the Yangtze River as a full moon rises. The following day the defiant warrior is defeated in the Battle of the Red Cliffs.



## MOON OF THE ENEMY'S LAIR

(Zokusā no tsuki)

1886

One of Japan's earliest warrior heroes was O-Usu no miko, "Little Prince Usu." In reality, the character O-Usu was a composite of several extraordinary historical generals. In the story illustrated here, Prince Usu, disguised as a woman, infiltrates the palace of enemy chieftains, kills their leaders, and eventually conquers their lands.



THE "YUGAO"  
CHAPTER FROM  
THE TALE OF GENJI

(Genji yugao no maki)

March 1886

**O**n the eleventh-century Heian court, intrigues and love affairs preoccupied the rather isolated aristocracy. The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari), written in 1021 by Lady Murasaki Shikibu, captures the essence of these poetic and self-indulgent courtiers. Here the tragic ghost of Yugao, one of young Prince Genji's lovers, glides through a graceful vine bearing flowers of the same name. After making love to the prince, the lovely and sweet Yugao died suddenly, having been cursed by a jealous former mistress.



## RECEIVED BACK INTO MOON PALACE

(Gekkyu no mukae)

March 1888

Tale of the Bamboo Cutter (Taketori monogatari) tells of an old bamboo basket maker and his childless wife who adopt an abandoned baby girl. In celebration of her radiant beauty, the couple named her Kaguyahime, or "Shining Princess." Many suitors, including the emperor, sought her hand in marriage. She finally revealed that she was the daughter of Joga, Queen of the Moon, and that she had to return to her realm in the heavens. As her attendants escort Princess Kaguya back to the moon, the old bamboo cutter pleads for her to stay.



## FARMERS CELEBRATING THE AUTUMN MOON

1891

The great haiku poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) spent much of his time journeying throughout the Japanese countryside recording his remarkable encounters with people and the land. As he came upon two farmers celebrating the full moon, he composed the verse:

*Since the crescent moon,  
I have been waiting for tonight.*



## MUSASHI PLAIN MOON

(Musashino no tsuki)

April 1892

The Musashi Plain surrounding Edo (now Tokyo) was inhabited by foxes, which, in Japanese folklore, were believed to have transformational powers. Often disguising themselves as beautiful women, foxes were associated with human attributes, such as pride, deviousness, and vanity. This vixen is languidly grooming herself while admiring her moonlit reflection in the water.



## Moon of the Red Cliffs

(Sekiheki no tsuki)

1889

In 1082, the Chinese poet Su Shi invited fellow scholars and artists to accompany him on a boat ride to the Red Cliffs on the Yangtze River. The famous story of Cao Cao's defeat in battle at the same site eight centuries earlier became the poet's inspiration for a famous ode that he composed under the light of a full moon.



IN THE MOONLIGHT  
UNDER THE TREES COMES  
A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

(Getsumai rinka bijin majiru)

March 1888

Zhao Shixiong (589-618), a Chinese poet, fell asleep by the light of a full moon under a flowering plum tree. He had a vision that he had been visited by the spirit of the plum tree in the guise of a beautiful woman. He was inspired to write a poem about the interlude.



## SAGA MOOR MOON

(Sagano no tsuki)

1891

Kogo no Tsubone (1159-1180), a beautiful and accomplished koto player, was a concubine of Emperor Takakura. The empress, who felt her son's right to succession was being threatened, ordered the assassination of Kogo. Aware of the plot, Kogo fled to a remote cottage in Saga. On behalf of the emperor, the warrior Minamoto no Nakakuni went in search of her. Eventually, while riding through the village of Saga, he recognized Logo's exquisite koto playing and joined her in a duet on his flute. He persuaded her to return to the court and to the emperor but to avoid the wrath of the empress, Kogo was forced to become a nun.



## GRAVE MARKER MOON

(Sotoba no tsuki)

March 1886

The ninth-century poet Ono no Komachi was once renowned for her beauty, position, and wealth. Her brilliance earned her a place as the only woman in the group Rokkasen, or "Six Poets." However, her arrogance eventually led to her downfall. Wandering destitute as an old woman, Komachi rests upon a fallen grave marker under a waning moon and reflects on the misguided passions of her life.



## HORIN TEMPLE MOON

(Horinji no tsuki)

December 1890

The tragic story of the twelfth-century lovers Yokobue and Tokiyori is illustrated here with a weeping Yokobue coming down the mountain from Fibrin Temple. Tokiyori's father had disapproved of the couple and refused to allow them to marry. The distraught Tokiyori fled to the temple to become a monk. When Yokobue came to see him, he refused to acknowledge her.



## MOON OF ENLIGHTENMENT

(Godō no tsuki)

April 1888

One of the Seven Lucky Gods, Hotei represents happiness and good fortune and usually is depicted in amused relaxation leaning against his bag of treasures. Here, Hotei demonstrates the Zen Buddhist teaching that a finger pointed at the moon is not the moon itself. The search for enlightenment, therefore, should not be confused with the moment of enlightenment.



## MOON OF INSANITY

(Tsuki no monogurui)

1889

Ochiyo was a young maidservant in the household of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. One day she received news that her lover had died and she went mad with grief. She wandered around the capital, rolling and unrolling the letters that he had sent her, until she also died.



## KINTO PICKS A PLUM BRANCH IN THE MOONLIGHT

January 1887

The courtier Fujiwara no Kintō (966-1041) was a celebrated poet, historian, and musician. One evening, he wandered out into newly fallen snow under a moonlit sky. Admiring the new blossoms on a plum branch, he is moved to compose the following verse

*In the midst of glimmering whiteness among the night's  
moon shadows, I part the snow and pluck plum blossoms.*



## THE MOON'S FOUR STRINGS

(Tsuki no yotsu no o)

August 1891

Semimaru was a tenth-century blind poet and musician of noble birth whose mastery of the arts and melancholy existence made him a popular subject of theater productions centuries later. Semimaru is shown here tuning a string on his lute at his mountain cottage near Kyoto. It was here that he chose to live in self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world.



## SUZAKU GATE MOON

(Suzakumon no tsuki)

February 1886

The courtier Hakuga no Sammi (913-980) was a well-known musician and accomplished flute player. He greatly admired the blind musician and poet Semimaru, eventually persuading him to become his teacher. Here, Hakuga, wearing the tall, black-lacquered cap of a courtier, plays a duet with an unknown master on a beautiful moonlit night beneath Suzaku Gate in Kyoto.



## READING BY THE MOON

(Dokusho no tsuki)

March 1888Z

Zi Luo (543-480 B.C.) came from a poor rural family but made every effort to educate himself, eventually rising in the ranks of the civil service to become a government official and scholar. His lifelong devotion to his parents made him one of China's revered Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety. He is shown here carrying a sack of rice to his elderly parents while studying in the light of a full moon.



## KITAYAMA MOON

(Kitayama no tsuki)

June 1886

**W**alking alone over moors north of Kyoto, Toyohara Sumiaki, a musician in the court of Emperor Go-Kashiwabara (1500-1526), is approached by snarling wolves. Cornered, he begins to play a beautiful melody on his wooden flute, causing the wolves to hesitate and then to recede into the woods, pacified by the magic of the song.



## CHANG E FLEES TO THE MOON

(Joga hogetsu tsuki)

October 1885

**A**ccording to ancient Chinese mythology, Chang E, wife of Hou Yi, an archer serving the mythical emperor Yao of China, stole the elixir of immortality from her husband. Quickly she consumed the magic potion herself and fled to the heavens to become the goddess of the moon.



## ISHIYAMA MOON

(Ishiyama no tsuki)

October 1889

The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari), considered the world's first novel, was completed in 1021. Lady Murasaki Shikibu created the adventures of Genji, a handsome prince, based on her own experiences and observations of life in the Heian court. Lady Murasaki is shown here on the balcony of Ishiyama Temple, gazing at the moon for inspiration as she prepares to begin her novel.



## MOON ON THE SOUTHERN SEA

(Nankai no tsuki)

1888

The Bodhisattva of mercy and compassion is known in China as Guanyin and in Japan as Kannon. This scene reflects Kannon's Buddhist origins in India as Avalokitesvara. One of Avalokitesvara's dwelling places on earth was a rocky promontory called Potalaka off the south coast of India. In Japan, this "southern sea" Kannon is revered by sailors and fishermen.



## HUAI RIVER MOON

(Waisui no tsuki)

June 1887

**W**u Zixu was a Chinese general during the Warring States period in China (480-222 B.C.). His brother and father died at the hands of the king of Chu. After the king died, Wu Zixu enlisted the help of a fisherman (shown here) to locate the king's tomb on the banks of the Huai River. When Wu Zixu found the grave, he exhumed the body and whipped it three hundred times to avenge the deaths of his father and his brother.



## SESON TEMPLE MOON

(Sesonji no tsuki)

1888

**F**rom the time he was a child, Prince Yoshitaka (d. 974) proved himself to be a brilliant poet. He and his brother Agechika excelled at composing renga, a form of poetry in which two or more people take turns contributing one verse at a time. Eventually, however, the more talented Yoshitaka gave up secular poetry in order to focus on his Buddhist studies and thus avoid competing with his jealous older brother. He is shown deep in meditation on the grounds of Seson Temple near Kyoto.



## CHINESE BEAUTY HOLDING A STRINGED INSTRUMENT

June 1887

This print illustrates a well-known poem by the eighth-century Chinese poet Wang Changling. An elegant Chinese noblewoman is distracted from her music by the loveliness of the evening. Wang's poem reads:

*The night is still and a hundred flowers  
are fragrant in the western palace;  
she orders the screen to be rolled up,  
regretting the passing of spring;  
with the yunhe across her lap she gazes at the moon;  
the colors of the trees are hazy  
in the indistinct moonlight.*



## SUMIYOSHI FULL MOON

(Sumiyoshi no meigetsu)

June 1887

**O**n a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi Shrine, the poet-courtier Fujiwara no Teika fell asleep on the veranda. This particular Shinto shrine was devoted to the patron deity of poets. Deep in sleep, Teika is visited in a dream by the deity in the ghostlike form of an old man.

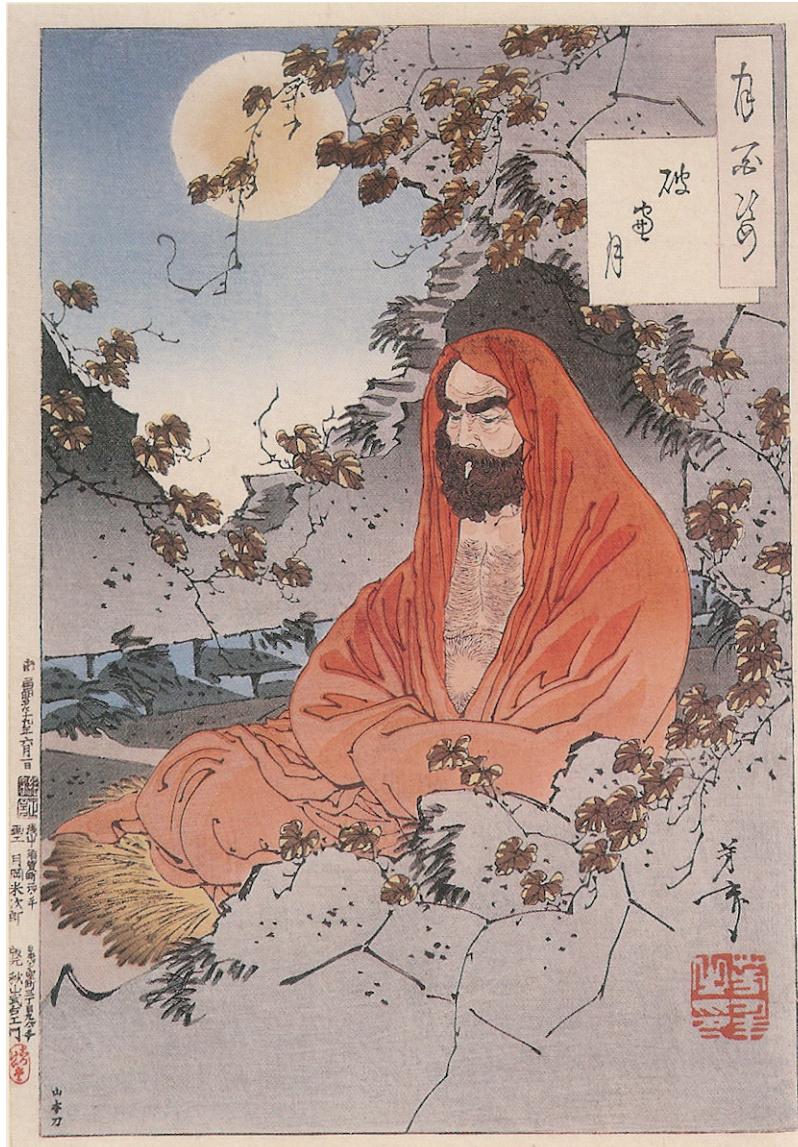


THE MOON  
THROUGH A  
CRUMBLING WINDOW

(Hasō no tsuki)

June 1886

The founder of Zen Buddhism, Bodhidharma, traveled from India to China seeking enlightenment. He is said to have spent nine years seated in meditation in a temple in northern China. Bodhidharma, known as Daruma in Japan, is shown here deep in meditation as the temple walls crumble around him.



## MOUNT YOSHINO MIDNIGHT MOON

(Yoshinoyama yowa no tsuki)

January 1886

**S**asaki no Kiyotaka, an adviser to Emperor Go-Daigo, was forced to commit suicide in 1333 after the emperor was ousted from power. His vengeful spirit tormented the emperor's court at Mount Yoshino. One evening during an eclipse, a daring yet serene lady of the court, Iga no Tsubone, faced the ghost of Kiyotaka and exorcised his spirit.



## LADY CHIYO AND THE BROKEN WATER BUCKET

November 1889

Kaga no Chiyo (1703-1775) was one of Japan's most celebrated poets. Late in her life she took vows and became a nun. This print illustrates a contemporary verse (perhaps written by someone in Yoshitoshi's circle) based on one of Lady Chiyo's best-known haiku:

*The bottom of the bucket  
which Lady Chiyo filled has fallen out;  
the moon has no home in the water.*



## MICHIZANE COMPOSES A POEM BY MOONLIGHT

January x886

Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) was a gifted scholar and artist in the Heian court. After his death, he was deified as Tenjin, the god of music, literature, and calligraphy. He composed the following poem in classical Chinese form at age eleven:

*The moon glimmers like bright snow  
and plum blossoms appear like reflected stars;  
ah! The golden mirror of the moon passes overhead  
as a fragrance from the jade chamber fills the garden.*



A BUDDHIST MONK  
RECEIVES SEEDS ON A  
MOONLIT NIGHT

(Bonsō tsukiyo ni keishi o uku)

June 1891

One of the Buddha's original disciples is shown here collecting the magical seeds that fall from the collecting cassia trees on the moon. These seeds represent the power of immortality since, by nature, they continually renew themselves. The Buddha's disciples achieved enlightenment but were charged with spreading the word of Buddhism once the Buddha had entered Nirvana, leaving the world behind.



## JADE RABBIT

(Gyokuto)

November 1886

**S**un Wukong (Songoku in Japanese) is the mischievous monkey of Chinese legend that achieved immortality by gobbling up the peaches of longevity from heaven's garden. Here, Sun Wukong is depicted scampering about with the rabbit in the moon, or "jade rabbit," a creature that spends his time pounding the elixir of life.



## THE MOON OF THE MILKY WAY

(Ginga no tsuki)  
September 1886

**A**cording to Chinese and Japanese legend, the constellations Vega and Altair represent the Weaver Maiden and the Herdsman, respectively. After the Weaver Maiden (Shokiyo) fell in love with and married the Herdsman (Kengi), she became so distracted that she neglected her duty as weaver of the cloth of heaven. Her frustrated father forbade the two lovers to see each other except in the seventh month of each year.



## TSUNENOBU AND THE DEMON

January 1886

The courtier Minamoto no Tsunenob (1016-1097) was watching the autumn moon rise when he heard the sound of cloth being pounded in the distance. Reminded of a famous Chinese T'ang dynasty poem, he recited the following verse:

*I listen to the sound of cloth being pounded as the moon shines serenely; and believe that here is someone else who has not yet gone to sleep.*



CASSIA  
TREE MOON

(Tsuki no katsura)

March 1886

**W**u Gang is the central figure in a Chinese legend about the eight magical cassia trees (katsura) that grow on the moon, rising thousands of feet into the air. A practitioner of Taoist magic, Wu Gang abused his powers and was punished by the gods, who condemned him to forever chop off the branches of the cassia tree, which immediately regenerated themselves.



## AKAZOME EMON VIEWING THE MOON FROM HER PALACE CHAMBERS

January 1887

Akazome Emon (956-1041) was a well-known noblewoman and poet of the Heian court. Despondent after a long, restless night awaiting her lover, she writes:

*I wish I had gone to bed immediately;  
but now the night has passed and  
I watch the moon descend.*



## LADY GOSECHI

(Gosechi no myōbu)

June 1887

**L**ady Gosechi is shown here dressed in nun's robes and playing the koto as two noblemen, moved by the haunting music, weep quietly. The word gosechi, meaning "five festivals," refers to formal musical rituals practiced at the court of the emperor. Lady Gosechi is thus a personification of the beautiful music associated with the past glory of the court.



## MOON OF THE FILIAL SON

(Kōshi no tsuki)

1889

O no no Takamura (802-852) represented a model of honesty and filial piety. Although he became a noted poet and calligrapher, occupying a lofty position in the imperial court, he continued to attend to his parents' needs by helping out with chores such as gathering firewood.



## MOON OF KINTOKI'S MOUNTAIN

(Kintokiyama no tsuki)

October 1890

The baby Kintaro, found abandoned at birth, was raised in the wilderness of Mount Ashigara by Yamauba, a female spirit. Kintarō spent much of his youth romping with the animals of the forest. Here he is shown gleefully watching the hare and monkey wrestle. When he grew up, Kintarō became the well-known warrior Kintoki.



## THE VILLAGE OF THE SHI CLAN ON A MOONLIT NIGHT

(Shikason tsukiyo)

November 1885

**S**hi Jin, the outlaw hero of the thirteenth-century Chinese novel *The Water Margin* (*Shuihu Zhuan*), was also known as "The Nine-Dragoned One" because of the nine dragons tattooed over his body. He joined a group of bandits in attacking his own village when he was made aware of how corrupt the village officials had become. Shi is depicted here in his home just before he fled with his fellow bandits to their base of operations in the nearby marshes, or "water margin."



## THE CRY OF THE FOX

(Konkai)

January 1886

In Japan, folk beliefs are rich with tales of foxes that have the magical power to disguise themselves as humans. In this illustration based on a kyōgen, a popular form of comic theatrical interlude, a fox has disguised itself as an old priest in order to persuade the priest's nephew, a hunter, to stop trapping foxes. In this print, we see the fox in the midst of changing back into its original form.



## Part Two: The Warrior

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UNDER THE SKILLED TEACHING of his mentor, Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi perfected his depiction of warriors and famous historic battles. In the Moon series, Yoshitoshi celebrates the heroes and villains of the intense period of civil wars between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. For more than four hundred years, rivalries between powerful military clans transformed the peaceful Heian court into a world dominated by violence, vengeance, and the pursuit of military glory. By the late nineteenth century, it was the samurai class that suffered most from the changes brought on by modernization. Yoshitoshi, who himself was born into a low-ranking samurai family, lamented the deterioration of the warrior's way of life and knew that his audience would be drawn to the heroes who symbolized a strong and virile Japan.

A warrior's fame, however, was not always gained through a successful military campaign. Central to Japanese tradition, and reflected in Yoshitoshi's prints, is the individual who reaches heroic status through a failed struggle against overwhelming odds. Faced with defeat, the warrior hero typically commits suicide in order to avoid the indignity of capture. Such purity of purpose and single-minded earnestness are the essence of this archetype. The myth of the failed hero is the equivalent of the universal concept of the fallen god who is resurrected so that he may dwell in a transcendent world—a world representing the perfection of those ideals for which he struggled on earth.

*Having fought in the Emperor's cause,  
[I know my end is near]  
What Joy to die like the tinted leaves  
that fall in Tatsuda  
Before they have been spoiled by autumn rains!*  
—Saigo Takamori, 1827-1877

## THE MOON OF OGURUSU IN YAMASHIRO

(Yamashiro ogurusu no tsuki)

February 1886

In 1582, Akechi Mitsuhide assassinated the powerful leader Oda Nobunaga. In retaliation, Toyotomi Hideyoshi's army attacked and defeated Mitsuhide's forces. As Mitsuhide fled to his home province, he was ambushed by a group of peasants hiding in the countryside near Ogurusu. Here we see Mitsuhide approaching on horseback in the distance, unaware of his impending doom.



## THE MOON'S INNER VISION

(Shinkan no tsuki)

June 1886

The blind Taira no Tomoume was a twelfth-century warrior. He is shown here fighting for his life as he is attacked from behind. On his back he carries a protective talisman in the form of a poem. The verse reads:

*From darkness I have wandered  
lost on to a darker path;  
the moon of my heart is becoming clouded.*



## FAITH IN THE THIRD-DAY MOON

(Shinko no mikazuki)

February 1886

This is a portrait of the fierce general Yamanaka Kikanosuke Yukimori (d. 1579). He is depicted here in the full state-of-the-art battle armor of his time. Yukimori's personal crest and symbol of good luck was the mikazuki, or "three-day moon," which he wears prominently on the front of his helmet.



## MOONLIGHT PATROL

(Gekka no sekko  
December 1885)

Saito Toshimitsu was the chief retainer of Akechi Mitsuhide (1526-1582). Here he is thought to be conducting surveillance along the Kamo River in Kyoto before the attack on Honnoji Temple in 1582. The temple was headquarters for Mitsuhide's nemesis, the warlord Oda Nobunaga, against whom he sought revenge. Mitsuhide successfully carried out his attack but was killed a few weeks later. Toshimitsu escaped and eventually became a monk.



NAKAMARO  
VIEWS THE MOON  
IN CHINA

May 1888

During the Nara period (A.D. 710-784), cultural exchange between Japan and T'ang dynasty China was at a zenith. However, travel between the two countries could be treacherous, leaving missionaries stranded for years at a time. Abe no Nakamaro (701-770) was sent to China to study mathematics but through a series of unfortunate events was never able to return to his homeland. One night, he composed a poem to express his homesickness for Japan:

*As I look out into the Plains of heaven,  
can this be the same moon I saw rise in Kasug  
behind Mount Mikasa?*



## JOGANDEN MOON

(Joganden no tsuki)

December 1888

**M**inamoto no Tsunemoto (A.D. 917-961) was a skilled archer and an official of high rank in the court of Emperor Shujaku. One autumn night near Joganden, a building in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, he shot a supernatural being in the form of a deer that was about to attack the emperor.

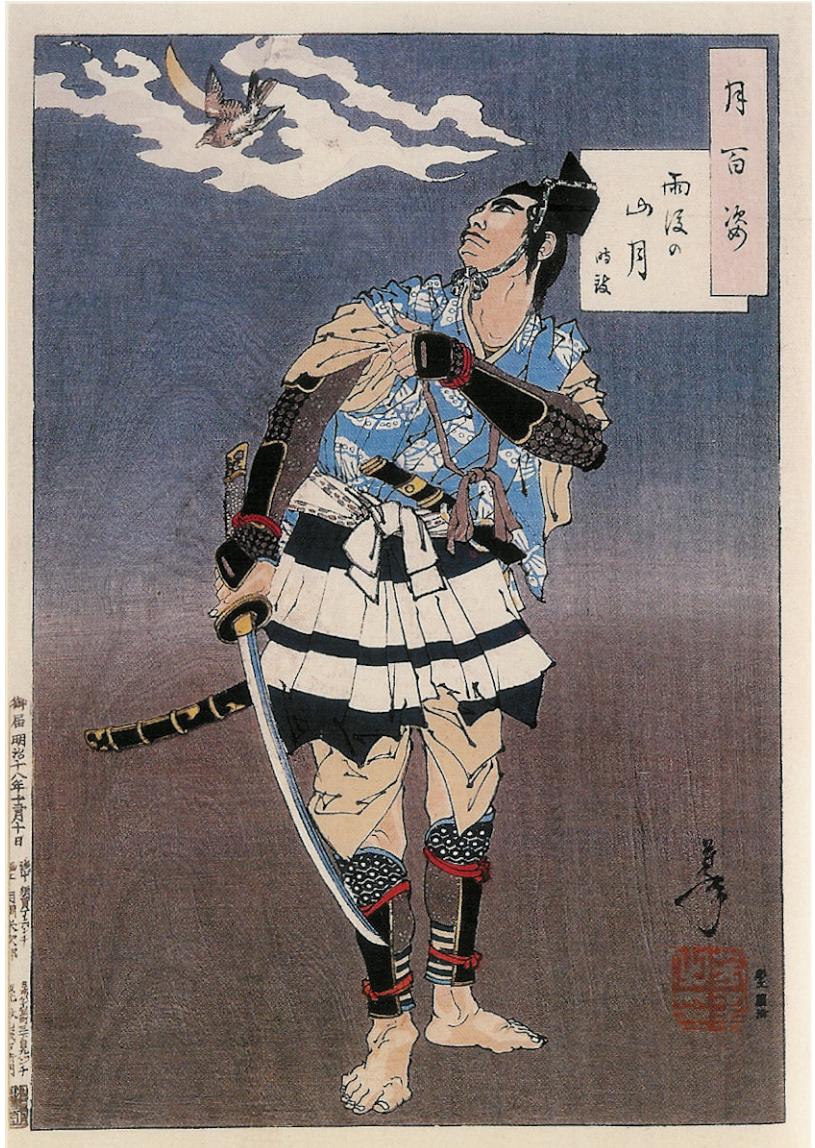


## MOUNTAIN MOON AFTER RAIN

(Ugo no sangetsu)

December 1885

Goro Tokimune and his brother Juro (the Soga brothers) are well-known figures in Japanese literature. This print illustrates a rainy night just moments after the brothers killed the man who had murdered their father when they were young boys. As he unrolls his sleeve, Goro looks up to the parting clouds and sees a cuckoo flying past, symbolizing the transient nature of life.



## MOUNT MIYAJI MOON

(Miyajiyama no tsuki)

November 1889

**A**fter participating in the Hogen Rebellion of 1156, the courtier Fujiwara no Moronaga was exiled to the island of Shikoku, where he is shown playing his lute in the middle of the beautiful forest on Mount Miyaji. He plays a bittersweet tune to soothe his longing for home.



## RENDEZVOUS BY MOONLIGHT

October 1890

**T**aira no Tadanori (1144-1184) was a respected warrior and a talented poet. In this illustration Tadanori waits impatiently outside the home of his mistress, snapping his fan to get her attention. She finally acknowledges his presence by commenting on the shrilling insects outside, a reference to the print's title poem:

*How noisy,  
the sound of insects calling in the meadow;  
as for me, I make no sound,  
but think of love.*



## MOUNT ASHIGARA MOON

(Ashiga.rayama no tsuki)

October 1889

The warrior Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (1056-1127) was an accomplished musician, particularly on the sho, a mouth organ made with bamboo reeds. One day, on his way into battle, he stopped on Mount Ashigara to play melodies with the son of his deceased sho master. They are shown here playing long into the moonlit evening.



## INABA MOUNTAIN MOON

(Inabayama no tsuki)

December 1885

**T**oyotomi Hideyoshi (r 536-1598), one of Japan's most celebrated warriors, played a pivotal role in bringing the country to a period of unification and relative peace after years of civil unrest. He is shown here as a young lieutenant scaling a cliff to gain access to the enemy's castle on Inaba Mountain. Once inside the castle walls, he raised the gourd carried on his back as a signal for troops to advance.



## AKASHI GIDAYU

April 1890

**D**eath with honor was the ultimate privilege for a Japanese warrior. In this print, General Akashi Gidayu prepares to commit seppuku (ritual disembowelment) after his forces' defeat in an important battle. The fact that Gidau has defied his commander's order not to take his life is reflected in his death poem:

*As I am about to enter the ranks of those who disobey;  
ever more brightly shines  
the moon of the summer night.*



## MOUNT JI MING MOON

(Keimeizan no tsuki)

June 1886

Zhang Liang (d. 168 B.C.) was a Chinese warrior who played a significant role in the wars preceding the founding of the Han Dynasty. On the eve of a decisive battle, Zhang Liang climbed Mount Ji Ming and played beautiful songs of the enemy soldiers' distant homeland. The soldiers became so nostalgic that most of them wandered off, one by one, into the night.



## MOUNT OTOWA MOON

(Otowayama no tsuki)

June 1886

The warrior Sakano no Tamuramaro died in 81 after a glorious career on the battlefield. He was honored as the Shinto god Tamura Myojin, or "Bright God Tamura," associated with Kiyomizu Temple on Mount Otowa. This print, which illustrates a scene from a Noh play entitled Tamura, shows the ghost of a young Tamura sweeping cherry petals on the grounds of the temple.



MOON  
AT THE  
YAMAKI MANSION

(Yamaki yakata no tsuki)

March 1886

Kato Kagekado was a loyal retainer of Yoritomo (1147-1199), leader of the Minamoto clan. The Minamotos' rival was the Taira clan, led by Kanetaka. One evening of a full moon, Yoritomo sent Kagekado and thirty others to attack Yamaki Mansion, the home of Kanetaka and the base of Taira operations. The clever Kagekado uses his helmet as a decoy on the other side of a paper screen to catch Kanetaka off guard. He quickly kills him and returns to Yoritomo with his enemy's head as a prize.



## GOJO BRIDGE MOON

(Gojobashi no tsuki)

April 1888

The young Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1189) was the epitome of the accomplished warrior and superior martial artist. One evening as he was about to cross the Gojo Bridge over the Kamo River in Kyoto, he was attacked by the fierce warrior-priest Benkei. Because Yoshitsune had studied with the tengu, the legendary bird people of Mount Kurama, he was able to leap effortlessly into the air and out of Benkei's grip, at the same time flinging his fan down on his attacker.



## THE MOON'S INVENTION

(Tsuki no hatsumei)

June 1891

The monk Jn'ei (1521-1607) was the bead priest of Hozo Temple in Nara. I-le is famous for inventing a distinctive spear with a crescent-shaped cross-blade called a kamayari. He also established a new discipline of fencing that utilized the new spear. In this print, Yoshitoshi is speculating as to how In'ei, gazing at the reflection of the moon in water, might have been inspired to create the spear.



## HIDETSUGU IN EXILE

December 1889

The great commander Toyotomi Hideyoshi remained childless until late in life. Seeking an heir, he adopted his nephew, Hidetsugu, who had shown promising leadership in battle. However, when Hideyoshi finally had a biological son, Hidetsugu was banished and forced to commit suicide. In this illustration, the imprisoned Hidetsugu composes a poem as he meditates on his hopeless situation:

*Did I ever imagine that  
as the clouds of the high autumn sky cleared,  
I would view the moon  
through a bamboo lattice window?*



## KAZAN TEMPLE MOON

(Kazanji no tsuki)

December 1890

**W**hen the seventeen-year-old Kazan became emperor in the year 985, he was viewed as a threat by the Fujiwara clan, the most powerful political force behind the throne. Consequently, Kazan was persuaded to become a priest by a devious Fujiwara politician and thereby was forced to abdicate only two years into his reign. The emperor is shown here leaving the imperial grounds just before dawn to take his vows at Gangyo Temple, later renamed Kazan Temple.

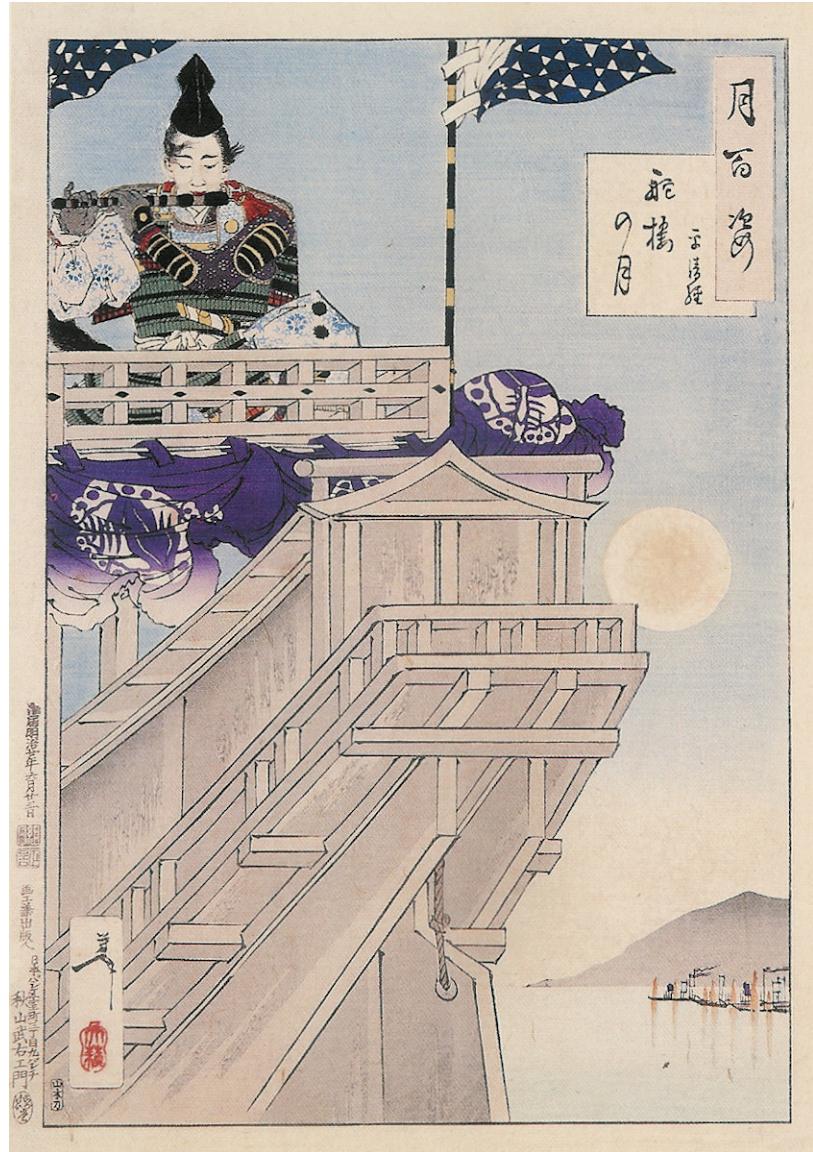


THE MOON  
AND THE HELM  
OF A BOAT

(Funahashi no tsuki)

June 1887

The thirteenth-century Tales of the Heike (Heike monogatari) recounts the downfall of the Taira family at the hands of the rival Minamoto clan. The final battle took place in 1185 at Dannoura. On the eve of his family's destruction, Tairo no Kiyotsune plays his flute at the helm of a boat while reflecting on his fate. Moments later, he threw himself into the sea, committing suicide.



## SHIZU PEAK MOON

(Shizugatake no tsuki)

October 1888

The great military commander Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) led his troops on a fifty-mile march to Shizu Peak outside Kyoto. Taking out his famous conch shell, Hideyoshi trumpets the signal to attack as the dawn moon sets behind the hill. The Battle of Shizugatake was a crucial victory for Hideyoshi's army.



## TAKAKURA MOON

(Takakura no tsuki)

August 1886

Prince Mochihito, the second son of Emperor Takakura (1161-1181), is the subject of a well-known story in Japanese history. The prince was involved in a plan to overthrow his young nephew, who recently had been chosen as the emperor's successor. The scheme was discovered, however, and Mochihito had to flee in order to avoid arrest. Mochihito's retainer, seen kneeling in the foreground, arranged for the prince and a companion to escape from Takakura Mansion cleverly disguised as women.



## CHIKUBUSHIMA MOON

(Chikubushima no tsuki)

March 1886

**O**n the island of Chikubu is a lovely shrine devoted to Benten, the goddess of music and art. The Tales of the Heike (Heike monogatari) relates the story of Taira no Tsunemasa, a twelfth-century warrior who visited the shrine one evening when his troops were stationed nearby. After praying for victory, he knelt down to play his lute under a wash of moonlight. The spirit of the goddess Benten was so touched by the beauty of his music that she appeared to Tsunemasa in the form of a white dragon.



## KENSHIN WATCHING GEESE IN THE MOONLIGHT

April 1890

The noble rivalry between Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578) and Takeda Shingen was a popular subject of literature and theater. Kenshin is portrayed here seated in full armor on the eve of a battle with Shingen on the island of Sado. Inspired by the quiet autumn night, he composes a poem in the Chinese style:

*Frost fills the camp and the autumn air is still;  
lines of returning geese  
cross the moon of the third hour.*



MOON OVER  
THE PINE FOREST  
OF MIO

1886

The warrior Takeda Shingen (1521-1573) spent much of his military career trying to gain access to the sea for his landlocked province. He is shown here deep in contemplation, facing the pine-covered Mio promontory and Mount Fuji beyond, the barriers to his success. The print's verse reads:

*On the coast at Kiyomi even the sky bars the way;  
the moon is blocked by the Mio pine groves.*



## KATATA BAY MOON

(Katadaura no tsuki)

June 1888

**A**fter Akechi Mitsuhide (1526-1582) and his forces attacked and killed the powerful Oda Nobunaga in June 1582, he and his retainers fled to escape retribution. The retainer Saito Kuranosuke sought refuge at the house of his old nurse in Katata Bay. Kuranosuke is shown here cautiously looking over his shoulder. Eventually, he was discovered and executed.



## INAMURA PROMONTORY MOON AT DAYBREAK

(Inamuragasaki no akebono no tsuki)

September 1886

**G**eneral Nitta Yoshisada (1301-1338) marched his army toward an enemy stronghold in Kamakura, where they became trapped by the sea and cliffs and the enemy troops surrounding them. According to legend, Yoshisada raised his sword toward the sea and prayed to the sea-gods for assistance. The waters parted, allowing Yoshisada and his soldiers to advance safely to Kamakura.



## MOUNT TOBISU DAWN MOON

(Tobisuya ma gyogetsu)

June 1887

In 1575, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) enlisted the aid of one of his retainers, Toda Hanbei Shigeyuki, to break the siege at Nagashino Castle. Shigeyuki devised a plan that gave him the advantage of surprise and allowed his troops to successfully secure the castle. This print shows Shigeyuki overseeing the attack at dawn, proudly displaying an enemy's skull as his personal standard.

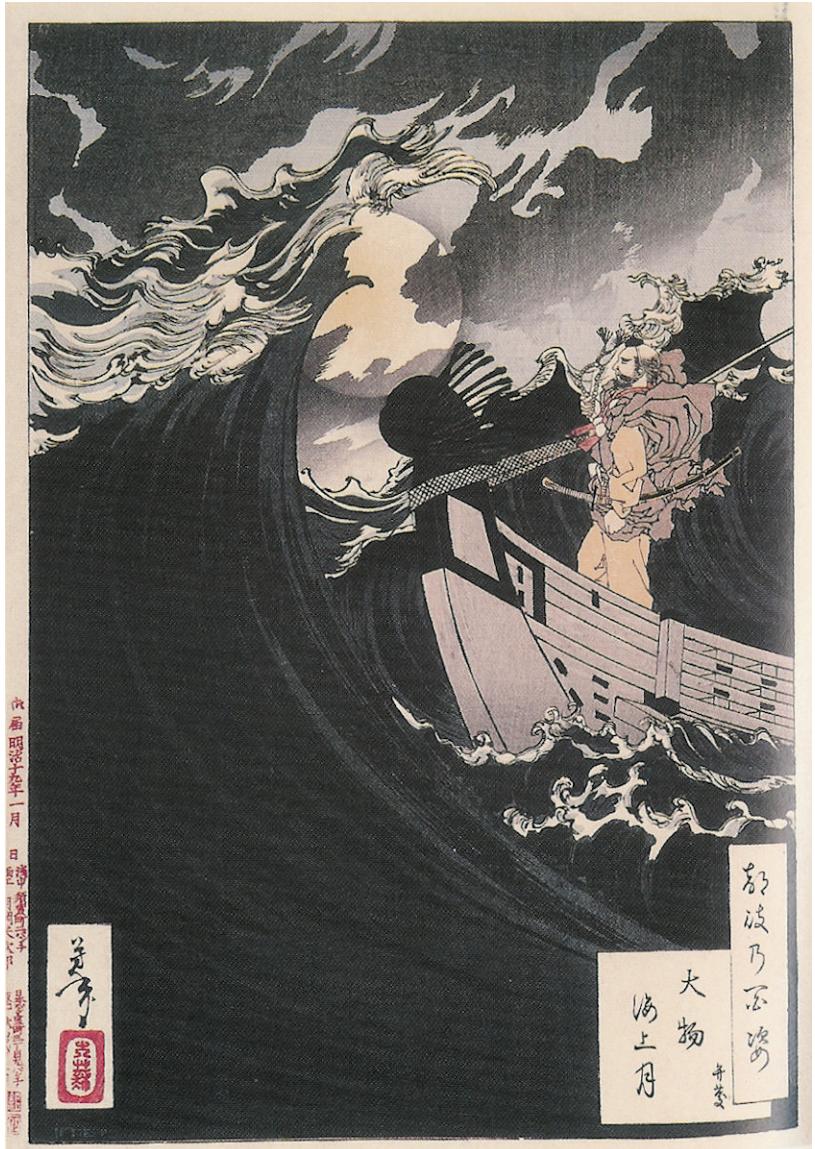


MOON  
ABOVE THE SEA  
AT DAIMOTSU BAY

(Daimotsu kaijo no tsuki)

January 1886

The warrior priest Musashibo Benkei (d. 1189) was the subject of countless stories and legends. According to one historical account, Benkei was accompanying his lord, Minamoto no Yoshitsune, and others across the sea when a huge storm engulfed the boat and killed many of the men. However, according to Noh and Kabuki plays, Benkei, positioned at the prow of the boat, exorcised the vengeful ghosts of their enemies who had conjured up the violent waves, allowing the group to sail on unharmed.



## MAEDA GEN'I VIEWING THE MOON FROM HIS CASTLE

June 1887

**M**aeda Gen'i (1539-1608) was a priest, lord of Kameyama Castle in Tamba Province, and a savvy government official under Toyotomi Hideyoshi. One cloudy evening, while reclining on the veranda of a temple, Gen'i gazes up at the moon and reflects on the material world that separates the self and one's Buddha nature (symbolized by the moon) and composes the following poem:

Usually I dislike a cloudy sky;  
tonight I realize that a cloudy sky  
makes me appreciate the light of the moon.



## RAINY MOON

(Uchu no tsuki)

1889

The lord of Bizen Province, Kojima Takanori (d. 1358), was a faithful retainer of Emperor Go-Daigo. When a power struggle sent the emperor into exile, Takanori attempted to follow him but lost his way. Disguised as a farmer in a straw rain cape, he devised a way to get word to the emperor. He carved a Chinese poem in the bark of a cherry tree, knowing that the emperor would understand the underlying message of hope.



## Part Three: The Floating World



LIVING ONLY FOR THE MOMENT, turning our full attention to the pleasures of the moon, the snow, the cherry blossoms and the maple leaves; singing songs, drinking wine, diverting ourselves in just floating, floating; caring not a whit for the pauperism staring us in the face, refusing to be disheartened . . . this is what we call the floating world ... (Ryoi, c. 1661)

The term "floating world" had its origins in a Buddhist expression that referred to the transitory and illusionary nature of the world. By the seventeenth century, the peace and stability of the Edo period had brought about an unprecedented prosperity and pursuit of leisure. In this context, the notion of the floating world gradually took on hedonistic implications, encompassing the realm of stylish

men and women, actors, and pleasure-seekers. In the Moon series, Yoshitoshi follows a long tradition of woodblock print artists in depicting the sorrow, irreverence, and eroticism of this lifestyle.

High-class courtesans were at the apex of this society, representing the ideal of beauty, dignity, elegance, and artistic accomplishment. In fact, the best female roles given to actors in the popular Kabuki theater were those of high-class prostitutes, with brothels serving as key settings in most plays. The women of the pleasure quarters had close relationships with the actors of the Kabuki theater. The rituals and performances of both were governed by strict codes of behavior designed to support a world of fantasy, and the survival of both depended on the cultivation of wealthy patrons.

FUKAMI JIKYU  
IN A SHOWER  
OF CHERRY PETALS

June 1887

Fukami Jikyu was a former samurai whose martial skills became superfluous once peace was established under Tokugawa rule (1600-1868). Like many other young men in the samurai class, he joined the *otokodate*, or "chivalrous men"—groups devoted to fighting injustice. Often associated with excessive behavior, elegant clothing, and pride, many such groups turned into notorious gangs, believed by some to be the predecessors of today's yakuza, or Japanese gangsters. Here Jikyu strolls arrogantly through the streets of the pleasure district, looks up at the moon, and composes the poem:

*The full moon, coming with a challenge  
to flaunt its beautiful brow!*



## HAZY-NIGHT MOON

(Oboroyo no tsuki)

January 1887

This print depicts an actor portraying the role of Kumasaka Chohan (d. 1174), a renegade priest whose ill-fated attack on the young General Minamoto no Yoshitsune was adapted for the Noh play entitled Kumasaka.



AN IRON CAULDRON  
AND THE MOON  
AT NIGHT

(Tsukiyo no kama)

February 1886

**T**wo rather silly crooks, Kofuna no Gengo and Koshi Hanzo, decide to steal a huge iron cooking pot. Seemingly unaware of the full moon illuminating their scheme, the pair begins banging and sawing at the pot as if they could break it into smaller, more easily concealed pieces.



## CLOTH-BEATING MOON

(Kinuta no tsuki)

April 1890

The woman pounding cloth is the lonely, despondent wife of an absentee husband and the heroine of the Noh play *Kinuta*, or *The Fulling Block*. Her husband has been gone three years on business so her maidservant Yugiri tries to console her by bringing in a wooden mallet. The wife begins to pound cloth on a fulling block and continues to strike the block throughout the night hoping that the sound will reach her husband in the distance and cause him to hurry home. The idea is based on a Chinese T'ang dynasty poem in which a man, far from his home, actually hears the steady, muffled sound of his wife pounding cloth.



## CHOFU VILLAGE MOON

(Chofu sato no tsuki)

June 1891

The village of Ch-Mu was situated on one of the six "Jewel Rivers," renowned for their clear, sparkling waters. In the thirteenth century, Fujiwara no Teika wrote a poem dedicated to the Tama River running through Chofu. The words honor the villagers who spent their days and nights pounding and softening newly woven cloth by the riverside:

At Tatsukri, morning dewdrops  
lie in shining strings  
on cloth spread out for bleaching;  
Jewel River village.



## DAWN MOON OF THE SHINTO RITES

(Shinji no zangetsu)

June 1886

**S**hinto is an ancient Japanese belief system based on worship of the natural world personified by a myriad of gods. Festivals surrounding Shinto rituals are an integral part of Japanese culture. This print illustrates the Sanno Festival held in Kyoto and Edo every June when the moon was full. The festival included a parade of lavishly decorated floats and people wearing costumes representing various gods.



## BON FESTIVAL MOON

(Bon no tsuki)  
February 1887

O-bon is a joyous summer festival held annually on a full moon in the seventh lunar month to honor the spirits of family ancestors. Highlights of the celebration is group dances, or bon odori, in which young and old don light, informal cotton kimonos and dance up and down the streets and sing late into the night.



## MOON OF PURE SNOW AT ASANO RIVER

(Asanogawa seisetsu no tsuki)

December 1885

A girl named Chikako was the tragic heroine in a story based on actual events. Her father, Zeniya Gohei (1773-1852), was imprisoned because of a failed business scheme. A desperate Chikako prayed and prayed for her father's acquittal. When it was not granted, she plunged into the frozen Asano River and drowned. Her father died in prison.



## MONKEY-MUSIC MOON

(Sarugaku no tsuki)

April 1892

Each new year the emperor's goodwill envoy was sent to the shogun's castle in Edo. For entertainment, the ruling family always arranged for a grand Noh performance. The invited wealthy townspeople would gather at the castle gates at dawn to ensure good seating. In this print, a rather stern and aloof samurai looks on as the boisterous crowds bustle past.



## 81 MOON ON THE SUMIDA RIVER

June 1891

This elegant-looking figure is the famous Kabuki actor Mizuki Tatsunosuke (1673-1745), who specialized in onnagata, or playing female roles. Here he is seen strolling along the Sumida River in the village of Sekiya admiring the cherry blossoms. As the moon rises, illuminating the trees, he composed this poem:



## SHINOBUGAOKA MOON

(Shinobugaoka no tsuki)

1889

In Japan, cherry blossom viewing was a favorite occasion, accompanied by picnicking and drinking. Gyokuensai, the samurai in this print, is attending a nighttime cherry blossom gathering on Shinobugaoka, a hill in Edo. When a breeze sends a shower of petals down around him, he raises his sleeve as if to shield himself from some unseen threat.



## DAWN MOON AND TUMBLING SNOW

(Seppu no gyogetsu)

1889

**P**opularly known in the West as the Forty-Seven Ronin, the Kabuki play Chushingura dramatizes the story of forty-seven retainers of the late Lord Asano and their quest to avenge his death. On a moonlit winter night in 1703, the ronin descend on the mansion of their enemy, a man named Moronau. This print focuses on Kobayashi Heihachiro, who attempts to defend Moronau from his attackers by disguising himself as a maid and catching the ronin off guard. Although he fights with desperate courage, both he and Moronau perish.



A COUNTRY COUPLE  
ENJOYS THE MOONLIGHT  
WITH THEIR INFANT SON

September 1886

**O**n a misty summer night under a full moon, a farmer and his wife, cradling their infant son, relax and enjoy the peaceful quiet and a kettle of sake. A trailing vine called y Yugao, or moonflower, envelopes them. This scene was inspired by a poem written by Yoshitoshi's friend Keika:

Pleasure is this: to lie under the moonflower bower;  
the man in his undershirt;  
the woman in her slip.



**YORIMASA WATCHES THE  
MONSTER APPROACH  
THE IMPERIAL PALACE**

March 1888

**M**inomoto no Yorimasa was a distinguished warrior and the hero of an extraordinary story that eventually became a Noh play. A fantastic beast called a nue was tormenting the emperor. One moonlit night, Yorimasa was able to bring down the supernatural creature with an arrow. At that moment, a cuckoo called out. Remarking on Yorimasa's great feat, an approaching court official recites, "Does the cuckoo also announce its name from above the clouds?" Yorimasa immediately responds, "I only bent my bow and the arrow shot itself."



## THE MOON AT HIGH TIDE

(Ideshio no tsuki)

April 1892

**J**o and Uba are a happy, aged couple and the subject of a popular Noh drama called *Takasago*. One evening, a Shinto priest stops to rest on a bench under two pine trees. Suddenly, an old man -and woman appear, raking the sand beneath the trees and speaking to him about the virtues of loyalty and commitment in a husband and wife. According to legend, Jo and Uba are actually the spirits of two ancient pine trees in Settsu Province.



MOON  
OF THE  
LONELY HOUSE

(Hitotsuya no tsuki)

August 1890

The old woman creeping around the corner is the subject of a popular story and several dramas, all of which preyed on the fears of many Japanese. According to one version, the woman was the demented mistress of an old house on an isolated moor. She served a lord who had a strange disease for which the only cure was human blood. The woman obtained his medicine by killing travelers who stayed at her house, typically with a huge kitchen knife.



## THE GION DISTRICT

(Gionmachi)  
October 1885

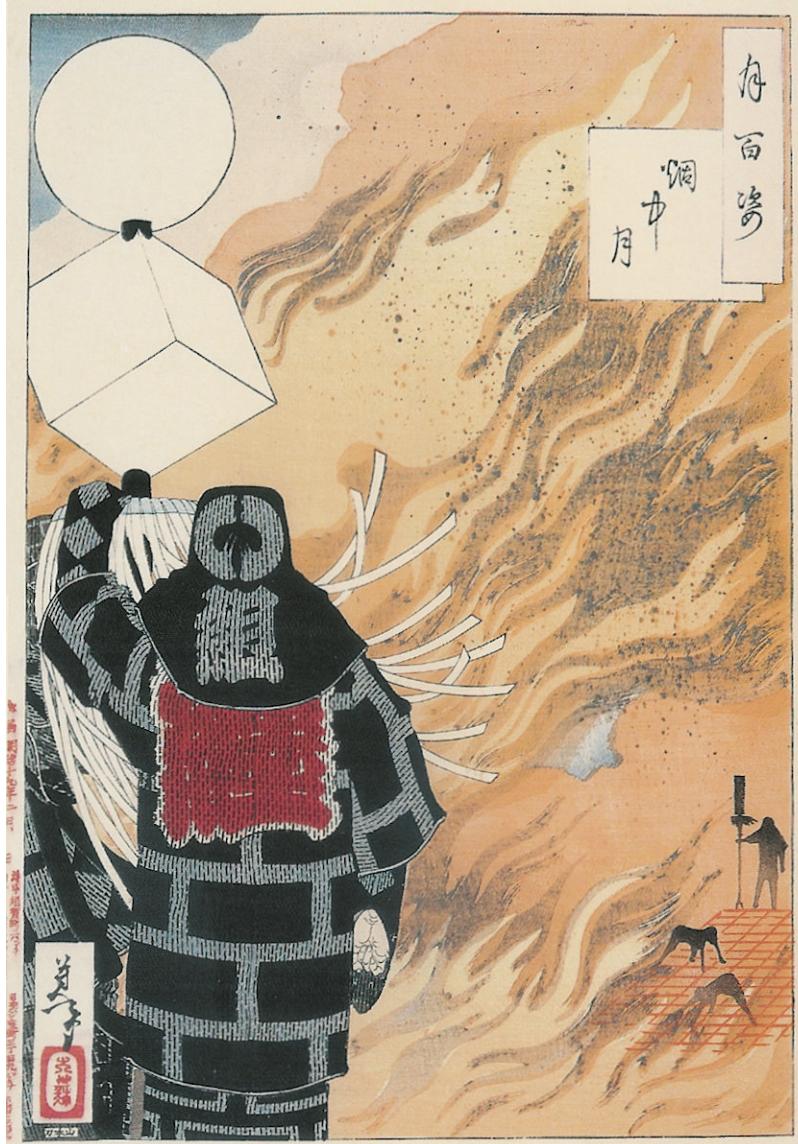
The figure in this print, Oishi Rikiya, played an important role in the great Kabuki tale of revenge, Forty-Seven Ronin (Chushingura). Rikiya was the son of Oishi Yuranosuke, the leader of the forty-seven samurai who were planning to avenge the death of their leader. Rikiya is delivering important information to his father at the Ichiriki Teahouse in the Gion District of Kyoto, where secret plans are being made.



## MOON AND SMOKE

(Enchu no tsuki)  
February 1886

The figure in the foreground is a fireman from Company Number One. He stands facing the roaring conflagration, proudly holding a matoi, or standard, above the flames to identify the location of his brigade. In nineteenth-century Japan, crowded towns full of houses constructed of wood and paper were extremely vulnerable to fire. The firefighting troops who fought these common blazes were considered exciting and colorful—characters and reached heroic status among the townspeople.



## THE MOON AND THE ABANDONED OLD WOMAN

(Obasute no tsuki)

December 1891

Throughout Japanese history, there are many stories of poverty-stricken farming families who abandoned a sick or elderly relation when they could no longer bear the financial burden. In literature and drama, this difficult subject was portrayed sometimes with sad resignation as the natural cycle of life and death. Sometimes, the abandoned relative is retrieved after remorse and guilt plague the family members. In this print, a farmer carries an aged woman on his back up a mountaintop to leave her there to die.



## THE MOON OF THE MOOR

(Hirano no tsuki)

May 1888

In a famous legend retold in both theater and dance, the courtier Fujiwara no Yasumasa (958-1036) was strolling home through the moors one evening playing his flute. A bandit named Hakamadare Yasusake crept up from behind intent on killing him for his fine robes. In moments, however, Hakamadare was mesmerized by the beautiful music and was unable to carry out the attack.



## COOLING OFF AT SHIJO

(Shijo noryo)

December 1885

Ohijo refers to an area of the entertainment district along the Kano River in Kyoto. In the heat of summer, it became a popular spot for residents and visitors to relax and dine in the cool evening hours. This young woman is a member of the Pontochō geisha community, signified by the sea plover motif on her kimono. She sits on a low bench built out over the streambed, dangling her tired feet.



**WOMAN WATCHING  
THE SHADOW OF  
A PINE BRANCH CAST  
BY THE MOON**

October 1

**A**courtesan leans out the veranda of a luxurious teahouse and gazes at the shadows cast by the moon. The red maple leaves on the painted screen and the aboveground brazier, used in tea ceremony, indicate that the scene takes place in early autumn. This print illustrates a haiku by the renowned poet Takarai Kikaku (1661-1707), who was known to spend a great deal of time in the pleasure quarters:

Full moon on the tatami mats;  
shadows of the pine branches.



## MOON OF THE PLEASURE QUARTERS

(Kuruwa no tsuki)

March 1886

**C**herry trees and blossoms were popular symbols of the Yoshiwara, the government-licensed prostitution district in Edo. Cherry trees lined the main streets, and when their blossoms were in full bloom parties and festivals also flourished. The blossoms themselves, transient in their beauty, were likened to prostitutes, often referred to as *yozakura*, or "night cherry blossoms." Here a courtesan and her child assistant enjoy the cherry blossoms as they flutter to the ground on a quiet moonlit night.



## PROSTITUTE STROLLING BY MOONLIGHT

June 1887

The woman walking along the river's edge is a low-class streetwalker, or tsujigimi. Referring to the heavy white makeup worn by these prostitutes, the female poet Oshun Hitotose composed the following verse:

Like reflections in the rice paddies;  
the faces of streetwalkers in the darkness  
are exposed by the autumn moonlight.



## THE COURTESAN TAKAO

October 1885

**A** number of honored courtesans took the name of Takao during the Edo period. The sixth Takao, depicted here, won the heart of a poor cloth dyer, who eventually married her. This print shows Takao in the early morning just after her lover has left the pleasure district to return to his hometown. Takao hears the lonely call of the cuckoo at dawn and composes the accompanying verse as she imagines her lover arriving at the boat landing in Komakata:

*By now you must be near Kamakata;  
a cuckoo calls.*



## ITSUKUSHIMA MOON

(Itsukushima no tsuki)

February 1886

The main shrine on the island of Itsukushima is dedicated to the Shinto deity Susano-o, the god of the moon and sea. At high tide the pillars of the shrine and the huge entrance gate (torii) are partially underwater. The full moon illuminates the floating shrine as a courtesan approaches by boat to take part in the festivities and offerings to the gods.



ARIKO WEEPS  
AS HER BOAT DRIFTS  
IN THE MOONLIGHT

September 1886

**A**riko Naishi (829-900), a lady-in-waiting in the Heian court, is despondent over an unrequited love. As she prepares to jump from the boat and drown herself, she recites the following verse:

*How hopeless it is;  
it would be better for me to sink beneath the waves;  
perhaps then I could see  
my man from Moon Capital*



## A GLIMPSE OF THE MOON

(Kaimani nn tsuki)

September 1886

The elegant Lady Kaoyo (d. 135T) was the wife of the court official En'ya Takasada. When a general named Ko no Moronao (d. 1351) heard of this extraordinary beauty, he bribed her maids to arrange for him to glimpse her after her bath. He then became obsessed with having Kaoyo for himself. He falsely accused her husband, En'ya, of treason and had him executed. When Kaoyo continued to reject his advances, he also had her killed.



## THEATER DISTRICT DAWN MOON

(Shiainachi no akatsuki)

1886

**S**hiainachii was the theater district in Edo. After a long night of revelry, the dawn moon signals a temporary end to the delights of the entertainment world. The fashionable young woman in this print is just one of many party-goers hurrying home in the cool morning air.



## Af te rwo r d

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I AM PLEASED TO HONOR the memory of my wife, Else Martinus Chapman, in writing these words and sharing with readers the history of our efforts to assemble this collection over a twenty-six-year search throughout Asia, Europe, Canada, and the United States.

Else loved creation, whether trees, birds, animals, flowers, mountains, or clouds. She began to draw at age four and was never without a camera and a drawing pad. As a sculptor, painter, weaver, jewelry maker, knitter, and photographer, Else created things of beauty and took great pleasure in introducing others to the beauty that she saw and that she created. When Else studied Oriental brush painting in Japan and Taiwan, she founded the Oriental Brush Artists' Guild and began to bring teachers from Japan and China to teach other interested artists. She enjoyed demonstrating Sumi-e and taught many so they could enjoy the beauty of brushstrokes in ink on Japanese paper.

We were introduced to Japanese woodblock prints in 1972 by the art dealer who was representing Else's bronze sculpture. We then read a biography of Ernest Fenollosa, the Harvard graduate who had gone to Japan to teach and found that the art schools and universities had abandoned traditional teaching and utensils for Western art and methods and, in fact, had virtual disdain for woodblock prints. Many people were using the prints for wrapping tissues. (In Japan, even kitchen scraps are wrapped like a gift before being discarded.) We learned that during the Edo period many

woodblock artists were commissioned to create unique prints as wrappings for gifts to particular friends or for special occasions.

We also read the writings of Van Gulick to learn the history of woodblock prints in Japan. We took every opportunity to view woodblock prints in museums and galleries. As design consultants to museums in the U.S., Canada, Japan, China, and in Europe, we consulted with Asian art curators, conservators, print dealers, and collectors. We read and we studied, we compared and we selected. We told collectors and dealers of our desire to assemble the best quality set of *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*. A dealer in Tokyo responded that he had found two of the series in excellent condition and would send them "on approval." On a visit to Amsterdam we would examine bins of print dealer Van Der Pete and find one or two in perfect condition and some with creases, wormholes, stains, or badly faded. Mr. Van Der Pete and his daughter became enthusiastic supporters of our efforts to complete the collection. I think Else's Amsterdam birth and ability in Dutch contributed to this friendship. We wrote to dealers and collectors in London, Berlin, Paris, New York, Washington, San Francisco, Vancouver,



Else Martinus Chapman

Los, Angeles, and elsewhere telling them of our desire to complete the collection. A collector who had a good duplicate would offer it to us. A dealer in San Francisco would tell us he had seen an excellent print in Nara and would reserve it for us. While working on the design of the new National Palace Museum in Taiwan we always stopped in San Francisco and searched the bins at Kabatoya gallery. In Taipei City we spent evenings at art dealers' shops looking for other "Aspects of the Moon" prints. After two or three weeks of working with the design team and the staff of the National Palace Museum, we would take Singapore Airlines to Hong Kong and continue our search. Then on to Tokyo and daily visits to the museums and dealers specializing in woodblock prints.

We were "selectors" before we became "collectors," as we always knew we would give the entire set to a museum and we chose for the best quality we could find. The Japanese and the Dutch print dealers became our partners in the search and while some advised us of the impossibility to find all one hundred in good condition others encouraged us and actively participated in the search. Mr. Van Der Pete would not show us what he had bought and put aside for us until we had tea and visited for an hour or so. A Tokyo dealer drove us to a residence in Odiwara where the owner was considering selling three of the woodblock prints her mother had left to her. She was excited by the idea of helping us assemble the entire collection for a museum and agreed to sell us the prints she had treasured.

Over the twenty-six years we gave each other individual prints as gifts for birthdays and wedding anniversaries, for Christmas and other causes for celebration. We enjoyed the opportunities to learn and to compare, to study, to select, and to acquire each of the "children," as though we were adopting and serving as stewards. We had disappointments when a highly praised print would arrive and found to be badly faded or creased. We found some duplicates in New York or in San Francisco, but one print eluded us. Most dealers told us that this single print needed to complete the collection, known as "Benkei in the Boat," was rare and impossible to find. We kept writing, asking, and searching. After five years of continued searching, Else presented that print to me as a Christmas gift in 1996 (plate 69). She had found it in Santa Fe in the possession of a Santa Fe collector who had decided to change the focus of his collecting efforts toward Egyptian artifacts. With the collection complete we turned our attention to finding a home to entrust it to and eventually entrusted it to the Museum of International Folk Art.

Joe Chapman  
Santa Fe,  
New Mexico

Japanese Ukiyo-e master

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) is

considered by many to be Japan's last great  
woodblock artist, and his final work, the series *One*

*Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, is regarded as his greatest  
achievement. Yoshitoshi's artistic career traces a period of  
social and political change in Japan, which opened its doors to  
trade with the West in 1853, the year that he published his first  
woodblock print. As tumult shook the foundations of old Japan,

Yoshitoshi cleaved to tradition in his choice of subject matter, draw-  
ing upon literature, history, and mythology, the warrior class, and  
the Buddhist notion of "the floating world" to preserve and cele-  
brate Japanese culture before modernism. In one hundred  
views and commentaries, the artist used the popular  
woodblock print form to depict everyday Japanese  
concerns and the collective apprehension  
about a future not yet clarified.

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